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EDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALS UPON CURRENT TOPICS.

COMPILED EVERY DAY FOR EVENING TELEGRAPH.

Reconstruction.

From the Tribune. Though we were confident from the first, we are very happy to be more fully assured that Mr. Stevens was mistaken in asserting that the reference to the Joint Committee on Reconstruction of his bill providing for the reorganization of the ten States not now represented in Congress was equivalent to an indefinite postponement of the subject. On the contrary, we understand that the subject has already been taken up by that Committee, with a determination to perfect and report a bill that ought to be passed, and to pass it at this session if possible. And though but five weeks remain, with very much to be done, we earnestly hope that their efforts may be crowned with success. Better late than never, especially in the case of the reconstruction of our Union. It is not over to the called session of the Fourth Congress, than last to pass a reconstruction bill.

As to the great leading features of that measure, we have repeatedly referred suggestions that have not been favorably received; and we may fairly presume that the Committee desire no more from this quarter. Yet the subject is of such transcendent, such imminent consequence, and the peril of misdoing with it so very grave, that we must once more solicit their attention. Even if it were certain that our views would be disregarded, that would not discharge us from the responsibility of offering them.

The chief mistake made by Congress hitherto, in our judgment, is that it seems to contemplate the people of the States lately in revolt as divided politically into barely two instead of the actual three classes, which are as follows:—

1. Those who, though possibly coerced or frightened into yielding some aid to the Rebellion, were always at heart Unionists, and rejoiced when the Confederacy was overthrown. 2. Those who, sincerely believing in slavery and State Sovereignty, went heartily and promptly into the secession movement, and fought it out to the end until they were unadvisedly beaten; but now honestly and frankly say, "We appealed to the sword, and the issue is decided against us; we accept the result in good faith, with all its legitimate consequences; and will henceforth loyally maintain the Union as of paramount authority, and the rights of all its people as established by the triumphant Emancipation policy."

3. Those who, at heart just as much Rebels to-day as they ever were; and, being defeated from further open, many hostilities by defeat, keep up a cowardly, sneaking warfare, by way-laying and assassinating individual Unionists, especially blacks, besides burning negro school-houses, and subjecting the unfortunate race to every form of abuse and outrage. These crimes, though seeming isolated and casual, are really prompted by the spirit of rebellion, and imperatively demand stern and prompt repression, in the interest alike of national justice and national integrity.

Can we be wrong in our conviction that the action of Congress hitherto has seemed to be the second of these classes, and calculated to drive its members back into the third? If those who were once Rebels, but are to-day as hearty Unionists as the best of us, are to be treated exactly like seceders, and how are we to develop and diffuse a hearty Union sentiment among those who have at any time been Rebels? Does not such treatment tend to drive back into the Rebel fold thousands who might and should be henceforth loyal citizens? Do we not expect the South, if we repeat accessions to its ranks after this fashion?

We beg all to understand—since there seems now to be no obvious temptation to come any way to a "sticky sentimentalism," no "humanitarianism," no special tenderness to criminals, or repugnance to penal inflictions, in this view of the matter, but simply sound, hard sense. The distinction we are ever to keep palpable, and important. If we are ever to stop the murders and outrages to which loyal men are still subjected throughout portions of the South, we must have the aid therein of Unionists who were formerly Rebels. We can have it; it would be culpable not to have it. Then why not take such a course as promptly to secure it?

Mr. Stevens' Reconstruction bill of this session was about the first submitted from our side of the House which clearly recognized that there were thousands of good Unionists at the South who had been Rebels. In this respect, it marked a signal advance in the Congressional apprehension of the subject. We think the positions therein affirmed might be more happily developed and more accurately applied; but the right principle is clearly recognized in his bill; and—whatever else the Joint Committee on Reconstruction may do—we trust, nay, we entreat, that this principle be embodied in their forthcoming measure.

As to those school-district oracles who still talk as though military execution might be wisely decreed and extensively enforced against three or four millions of people, argument would be wasted on them. Silence refutes them with adequate cogency and respect. If there are those who can distinguish what is practicable from what is nakedly impossible, and who would not have an empire lie waste, and general poverty, insecurity, and suffering, while they prosecuted fanciful, illusory projects of vengeance, suggestions may be made with some hope of resulting advantage. To such, certainly, we need hardly urge the wisdom of embodying in the forthcoming measure of reconstruction all the kindly, reconciling provisions that are intended to be carried into effect. If, for instance, there are to be no further prosecutions for simple treason, let the bill so provide. If there are to be no more confiscations, or none but under certain aggravating circumstances, let that likewise be specified. And let all the requirements of reconstruction be distinctly set forth; so that any State which shall in good faith comply with them shall thereupon be promptly restored to self-control and representation in Congress. And let it be clearly understood necessary to leave anything essential to contingencies. Let us have a plan which executes itself, or which must at all events be executed.

As we seem to cavil and complain where the black-and-white partisan finds everything lovely and embraced with admiration? Let us close with a citation from one of the greatest Americans (though he was a South Carolinian), Hugh S. Legaré, who concluded his memorable speech in his house against the Sub-Treasury scheme as follows:—

"I have spoken what I have felt and thought, with reference to the party. But I will say one word more. I have been generally acted on by the measure, but have hesitated to vote for it to oblige my friends. It is a strange and a great mistake. A true friend ought to be a faithful counselor. Let them remember that deep reproach which the great poet puts in the mouth of one of his heroes:—

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The Work Before the Reconstruction Committee—The Right Way to Do It. From the Herald. "Old Thad Stevens" was set back the other day in the House of Representatives by the commitment of his bill to reorganize the Rebel States to the Joint Committee of the two Houses on Reconstruction. This Committee, thus charged with this important bill, will, as we learn, enter immediately upon the preparation of a proper bill of reorganization, in view of the rejection of the pending Constitutional amendment by the unconstructed Southern States.

and will, it is expected, report some general measure to the House within a few days, in order, if possible, to secure its passage during the present session. Great credit is therefore accorded to Mr. Stevens, because with this session, on the 4th of March, this joint committee, with the present Congress, expires, and all unfinished legislative measures in either House must, with the new Congress, in order to be finished, be taken up de novo. "Old Thad" was of the opinion that the reference of the bill would be its death, but it means only the transfer of the subject to the new Congress.

We think that was a wise proceeding, because the new Congress, elected upon the platform of the pending amendment, will know precisely what to do in this business of reconstruction, and because, during the four weeks, and a half, remaining of this Congress, the two Houses, to say nothing of the Tariff, the Gold bill, or the Bankrupt bill, will have enough in the way of unfinished measures of a peremptory character to occupy all their time. Assuming, therefore, that nothing further will be done by this Congress for the excluded States, the question recurs, "What will be the programme of the new Congress?" Doubtless the first thing in order will be the trial of President Johnson on an impeachment for certain "high crimes and misdemeanors" from the House. This trial, we expect, will be completed with the conviction and removal of President Johnson by or before the first of May.

With an assignment he will probably be suspended, and by a new law passed for the purpose, General Grant may be appointed to supersede him during his suspension and after his removal for the remainder of his presidential term. We think it is highly probable that the removal of Mr. Johnson, the President of the Senate, under the existing law, will take his place. As, then, with the new Congress a new President of the Senate will be elected, the choice will be made of the absence of any new law on the subject, as a temporary election to the White House. In this view Senator Fessenden, Trumbull, or Wade will probably be the man.

At the same time, while Congress is thus disposing of the stumbling-block now at the head of the Executive department, and providing a substitute in his place, the ratification of the pending amendment will have been consummated by three-fourths of the States constituting now the Government of the United States. Leaving out Nebraska and Colorado, the whole number of States entitled to a voice upon this amendment is twenty-six, of which number twenty is three-fourths. Already the ratification has been made by Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont, New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Minnesota, Oregon, Nevada, Tennessee, and West Virginia—seventeen States. We want only three more, and Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Michigan, and California will do it, and they rarely furnish those three within the next thirty days. The duty will then devolve upon Congress of proclaiming the amendment part and parcel of the Federal Constitution, the supreme law of the land, binding alike upon the inside and the outside States and the Territories.

With this proclamation by law it will become the duty of the President, under such an enabling act as Congress may pass, on the basis of this enabling act, to proceed to the ratification of the Rebel States; and a refusal in this matter to execute the law will of itself be a sufficient cause for impeachment. This is the right way for Southern reconstruction—it is building on a constitutional foundation, and will not be overturned by any future securities needed for the future. The States and people represented in the Government are the Government, and the Government is the Government; the Rebel States are not the Government, and the Government is not the Rebel States, and the Government is not the Rebel States.

President Johnson, in recognizing them as members lawfully seated by his own act, and the action of Congress, clearly became a subject for impeachment. With his removal, as the Constitution provides, and with General Grant in his place, the saving virtues of the amendment will be at once understood and accepted by all the States. The preposterous old notions of the Constitution and State rights, including the right to shoot niggers and Yankees, which they are now preaching and practicing under the protection of President Johnson, will be at once abandoned. The Rebel States' political application of Lee's surrender, impeachment, the amendment, and General Grant to execute it South, ought then to be, and we expect will be, the programme of the new Congress.

The Clouds Accumulating—Turkey About to Fall to Pieces.

From the Times. "The Oriental question is reopened. It is of little importance who opened it; it is given to nobody to repress it." Thus the *Societe* of Paris, on January 15, begins its editorial on this all-absorbing topic. Our French contemporary is probably right. The system of theocratic government, so indivisible from Ottoman rule, is an exotic in Europe, has never been acclimated, and no diplomatic juggling can much longer sustain and maintain it. It is not from any religious impulses that we speak so. It is the irresistible spirit of progress that pushes on events for the ultimate downfall of Turkey, and we only regret that every eye with his eyes open, and capable of judging, must have seen and recognized for himself. While to the north, the west, and south of Turkey, all nations, by the liberal adoption of the progressive spirit of the age, have been more or less advancing, and the Greek revolution, and promotion of our own Henry Clay to his eloquent appeal in favor of the Greeks; which inspired President Monroe to declare, in his annual message of 1823, that "the dominion of Greece is forever gone," and that "it is the duty of Greece to acquire her independence." It was this that then impelled Englishmen and Frenchmen and Germans to volunteer in the Greek war of liberation, and that applauded the many acts of kindness and hospitality shown to the Greek refugees by the American squadron in the Mediterranean. The independence of Greece, then, was the work of the joint assistance of all liberal-minded nations. Selfish diplomacy, however, circumscribed the limits, and the Greek Christians were heartlessly left to the rule of the dominion of the Turk, under the plea of preserving the balance of power by maintaining for Turkey in Europe a mere shadow of independence.

Very recently, this Oriental question has disturbed the repose of Continental rulers from time to time. The so-called "questions" of the Danubian Principalities, of Bosnia, Servia, Montenegro, of the neutrality of the Black Sea, of the possession of the Straits, of the Greek, even that of the possession or Christian protection of the holy places in Palestine, are but so many parts of the all-absorbing topic of the continued existence of Turkey in Europe in its present condition of stagnant and retrograde theocracy. Some weeks ago, a prominent French diplomatist was reported to have declared that if these troubles be not settled six weeks thence, they will certainly outgrow diplomacy. And it seems from latest advices, by mail as well as by telegraph, that they have already done so. Turkey is arising to a prodigious extent, considering the rapid and indolent character of her Mussulman population; little Greece is marshalling nearly all her available forces; Russia and Austria are concentrating troops upon every adjacent point where their immediate use is likely to be wanted; the Italians are in a paroxysm of excitement, and look in hundreds and thousands to the aid of Crete and the Greeks, for whom they feel as for a comrade nationality. Public opinion in France and England is becoming highly excited, and may push their unwilling Governments to some action.

Thus we see nearly the whole of Europe

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"I'm going to the impending fray, and all signs point to the fact that this time Turkey will find few if any allies. The story of Ararat struck a sympathetic chord in the mind of Missolonghi, and if once more the Turk shall be called to face in battle the forces of civilized Europe, let us hope it may be for the last time, and that it will end with quelling him somewhere in Asia, where he came from and where he properly belongs. Possibly, Napoleon may fear that his pet scheme of the great Exhibition may be spoiled or largely interfered with; possibly he may desire and succeed to postpone the outbreak till after its close, but possibly also he may become compelled to have the contest localized to Turkish territory. But let the flames of general war rise blood-red in the East, and no more can it be said that they will not light for fresh prey. Whatever may be the other results, the end of Turkey seems near at hand.

The Dog on the Door-Steps.

From the World. There is in Philadelphia a very snug and most respectable private house, the proprietor is Mr. Peter Augustin. He, and his father before him, has always held a respectable social position, and followed a useful calling. Here, if a gentleman, or more than one, wishes to give a private dinner party, he can do it. Here bank directors and turnpike managers dine, and there is, or at least was supposed to be, over it all the shield of privacy which protects social intercourse. Last week a few gentlemen invited Mr. Buchanan, once President of the United States, to meet them at dinner in the most agreeable and unceremonious sort of way, and he came, and doubtless the dinner was a good one, and all the better because it was not interrupted or interrupted by speeches or toasts or anything of the kind. It was strictly a private entertainment. But now-a-days, and especially in the City of Brotherly Love, it is said to be no security, if people don't choose, there is at the League, they are not allowed to dine in peace anywhere. On this evening, it seems, Mr. John W. Forney, Secretary of the Senate, and editor of the *Press*, was in the city of his adoption. He was, that night, very bored. He had been at the Union League and found it dull—as who does not?—and was wandering down Walnut street, when he espied the lights in Mr. Augustin's dining-room. "Surely," thought he, "to-night is a banquet here, and where loyalty is, there I must be welcome. It is too soon to go to bed." He crossed the way and rang the bell, and when Mr. Augustin appeared, he boldly asked who were the company to stay to-night, and the reply was given in courteous but emphatic terms that it was none of his business, and he turned away and sat, desolate and thirsty, on the lower step and wept. *Canis ululans ululans*. He tried the bell again, and this time with better success, for a subordinate merely answered it, and gave Mr. Forney the names of the company and possibly a copy of the bill of fare, and perhaps some of the remnants of the feast; and, armed with this, he rushed down the street to the dining-room, where he found the company just as he was preparing a Sunday article on the family relations of the royal family of Prussia or Saxo-Gotha, and wrote the following "decent" editorial for the delectation of the ladies and gentlemen of Philadelphia. We have in no other comment to make on it than this, that we do not believe there is another community which would tolerate such a social outrage or such a fellow, in Philadelphia. Forney is a loyal gentleman!

The following persons composed the company: O. P. Buchanan, Editor of the *Register*, Richard Vaux, J. B. Baker (ex-Collector), Henry M. Phillips, Dr. Evans, of West Chester, George Sharswood, J. T. Montgomery, Dr. Bidde, Mr. Savage, Dr. McCrear.

It will be hard to find a more complete representative body. It was the *creme de la creme* of the sympathizers. The exploit of Mr. Ingersoll at New York, where he insulted the Government that protected him—the speeches of Mr. Vaux in ranting apologetics for the Rebel cause, for steady fiction of Dr. Evans for the "lost cause"—are as well known as the obedient following of J. B.'s example by the other patrons of the feast. What a happy reunion it must have been! Nothing to interfere with the flow of congenial and radiant voices of intrusive patriotism; no loud interjection of offensive loyalty; no reminder of the death of slavery; no vulgar allusion to the death of the Confederacy; above all, no "Lincoln hiring" in the shape of a Union soldier, or the "lost cause" as well known as the obedient following of J. B.'s example by the other patrons of the feast. What a happy reunion it must have been! 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